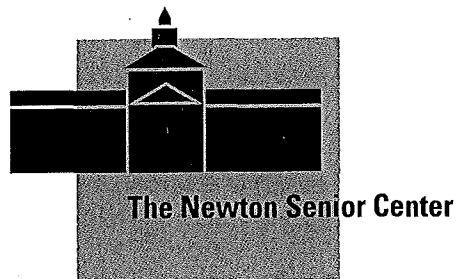


**APPLICATION FOR COMMUNITY  
PRESERVATION FUNDING**

**THE PARK AT THE NEWTON SENIOR CENTER**



PROPERTY OF:  
DEPARTMENT OF  
PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT  
CITY HALL  
1000 Commonwealth Avenue  
NEWTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02159

*\* DO NOT TAKE \**  
*\* FOR REVIEW ONLY \**

**OCTOBER 15, 2004**

2004 OCT 14 PM 3:40

City of Newton



David B. Cohen  
Mayor

## APPLICATION FOR COMMUNITY PRESERVATION FUNDING

Submit to Jennifer Goldson, Community Preservation Planner  
Newton Planning and Development Department  
1000 Commonwealth Avenue, Newton, MA 02459  
jgoldson@ci.newton.ma.us  
617-796-1120 ext. 1131

**Name of Applicant**<sup>1</sup> The Senior Citizens Fund of Newton Inc.

**Name of Co-Applicant :** The Department of Human Services-Newton Senior Center

**Contact Name** Jayne Colino, Director Newton Council on Aging and Senior Center

**Mailing Address** 345 Walnut St City Newton ville State MA Zip 02460

**Daytime Phone** 617-796-1660 **Email** jcolino@ci.newton.ma.us

**Name of Proposal** The Park at the Newton Senior Center

**Address of Proposal (or assessor's parcel id)** 345 Walnut St Newtonville, MA

**CPA Category ( all that apply)** Open space Historic preservation Recreation Community housing

**CPA Funding Requested** \$271,210 **Total Cost of Proposed Project:** \$329,210

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION:** Attach answers to the following questions. Applications will be returned as incomplete if all requested information is not provided. Include supporting materials as necessary.

### **PROJECT DESCRIPTION: A BEAUTIFULLY, RENEWED PARK FOR PEOPLE OF ALL AGES**

The Newton Senior Center, in collaboration with the Senior Citizens Fund of Newton Inc.(SCFN a private non-profit 501c3 organization) proposes to develop the Center's frontscape on Walnut St. to restore its historic elegance and promote passive recreational activities among people of all ages. With funding from SCFN, preliminary plans and cost estimates have already been developed, and support for the realization of the project is growing among Newtonville neighbors and citywide Center participants and their families. The "Oasis Garden", located in the courtyard adjacent to the Center's main entrance in the rear of the building is already an award-winning and beloved space for quiet reflection and activity. Developed and maintained with privately raised funds, this garden reflects the Senior Center's design intent: to provide a dignified environment that reflects the contributions of Newton's seniors and the value that the City of Newton places on their continued participation in civic life. The Newton Senior Center is a study in success. It has been functioning at capacity since it opened in October, 1993. The Oasis Garden has offered staff and volunteers the opportunity for expanded programming in nice weather, and has traditionally served as the site for such functions as garden parties, concerts, barbeques, and exercise classes. The Oasis Garden, courtyard, and fountain is surrounded by lattice fencing, opening to the Center's new rear entrance. It is truly an oasis where one can often find people just sitting,

<sup>1</sup> **If the proposal is on City-owned land, either the applicant or the co-applicant must be the City Board, Commission, or Department in control of the land.**

enjoying the garden, reading, eating, or chatting. Its enclosure makes it the quiet, contemplative space it was meant to be; yet it also shields its availability to the community at large.

The Walnut Street frontscape of the Newton Senior Center is the subject of this proposal. It seeks to expand the passive recreation opportunities now available in the Oasis Garden to the wider community, while upgrading the design and restoring the landscape's historic pathways and shape. It has been designed specifically to encourage use by people of all ages, seniors, high schoolers (Newton North is just up the street), families, and others who would seek a quiet interlude, a game of chess, or a place to meet. The Center's Director has prioritized *outreach* for the last three years to encourage expanded services without expanded space. The development of the Park at the Newton Senior Center will support these efforts both by making the Center itself more visible and inviting, and by providing additional space for expanded programming several months a year.

The proposed design has been developed by WingNut Gardens and Pressley Landscape Architects, Inc. It restores the original and historic path to the building's front entrance, which is being re-opened for public use. (It had been closed for security reasons, but internal design and management modifications are successfully addressing these.) The area south of the front entrance will include tables, seating, and benches on a hard surface that can be navigated by families with strollers, people walking independently or with canes or walkers, and people using wheelchairs. In addition, an existing chess table will be relocated with new seating so that the "Chess Nuts" and others can enjoy a game outside, in a location more suitable to the pursuit. The area to the north of the entrance will provide some benches for seating and a grassy area for picnics, croquet, or just the pleasure of the scent of grass and the feel of grass between your toes.

A private donor has approached the Senior Citizen Fund of Newton with an offer to fund a sculpture to be installed in the redesigned The Park At the Newton Senior Center. Although these negotiations are not complete at this time, the very real potential exists for the grassy area to include a public sculpture of extraordinary merit.

Such essentials as quality furnishings and materials, and lighting, and irrigation are included in the Park's design. These are selected to ensure the Park's safe and equitable use by people of all ages and abilities, morning, noon, and night. The proposed design specifies the highest quality materials, consistent with the design of the Senior Center's interior and its Oasis Garden. The lighting will make any nighttime use visible, while also highlighting the Center's beautiful landscape and architectural elements. An existing irrigation system will ensure plant life through the dry season, and limit the cost of daily maintenance.

No new municipal park can be developed without a plan for its ongoing maintenance. For ten years the SCFN and the Senior Center staff has funded and managed the Center's garden and grounds maintenance. The expanded garden will be designed to require no additional maintenance than is currently required; and maintenance and funding will continue with the same, proven approach that is already in place.

With funds from Newton's CPA, enhanced with private funds already committed by the Senior Citizens Fund of Newton, the Park at the Newton Senior Center can become a reality by the Spring of 2006.

1. *Goals:* What are the goals of the proposed project?

**THE PARK AT THE NEWTON SENIOR CENTER MEETS MANY CPA GOALS**

The primary goal of The Park at The Newton Senior Center project is to: provide a fully accessible, passive recreation public park for people of all ages and abilities. To begin realizing this goal, the Department of Human Services has worked with local supporters to develop the enclosed conceptual design intended to upgrade the Center's frontscape along Walnut St. with plantings, pathways, lighting and seating that will invite people of all ages to gather, rest, read, play board games, talk, eat, and generally enjoy the conveniently accessible public space.

This goal addresses the goals articulated in the City of Newton's Recreation and Open space plan:

- To address the increasing resident interest in less structured, more passive recreation opportunities,
- To provide additional small scale, passive recreational facilities for uses such as sitting areas, walking paths... that are responsive to the specific needs of elderly and people with disabilities.

We expect that local merchants, their customers, neighbors, students, families, and Senior Center participants will utilize The Park at the Newton Senior Center.

The Park at the Newton Senior Center project meets the Community Preservation Plan's general goals as well as those for three specific eligibility categories, Recreation, Open Space, and Historical Preservation.

- Contribute to the preservation of Newton's unique character,
- Boost the vitality of the community, and
- Enhance the quality of life for its residents. Create small pocket parks,
- Enable the development of passive recreation opportunities.
- Support the preservation and/or restoration of municipally-owned resources that are on the National or State Register, or that have been landmarked or found to be "preferably preserved" by the Newton Historical Commission, and
- Enable access to this resource by the public.

The Newton Senior Center building is considered an "historically significant" building.

2. *Community Need:* Why is this project needed? Does it address needs identified in existing City plans?

**THE NEWTON COMMUNITY NEEDS THE PARK AT THE NEWTON SENIOR CENTER**

Newton's Recreation and Open Space Plan intends to meet the National Recreation Association's minimum ratio of public open space/ 1000 residents. According to this standard Newtonville (ward 2- precinct 1) falls below this standard. It is generally recognized that the north side of the city is further from that ratio than the south side of the city. The City's plan states that: "where neighborhoods fall short of the standard efforts will be made to fill the gaps by creating "small pocket parks". The City is currently reevaluating its public land to identify potential neighborhood parks, including roadside land, that could be designated or developed as small

pocket parks. The proposed Park at the Newton Senior Center will help the City fulfill the need for additional, small pocket parks. It will be both a neighborhood gem and a city treasure.

Newton's Recreation and Open Space Plan also defines the need to increase recreational open space that serve the general population as well as special groups, such as youth, people with disabilities, and the elderly. The Park at the Newton Senior Center is specifically designed to welcome people of all ages and abilities, and encourage interaction among these groups.

In addition, Newton's Recreation and Open Space Plan defines the need to locate facilities in places that are easily accessible to people both from the local neighborhood as well as people city wide. Unmet needs exist in the provision of the informal recreational opportunities for the elderly such as walks and sitting places. The City strives to meet its objective to provide small-scale passive recreation uses in convenient locations that are sensitive to the needs of the special groups listed above. The Park at the Newton Senior Center helps to address this objective by providing a small scale conveniently located passive recreation opportunity accessible to special groups as well as the whole city. It is clearly available to participants at the Senior Center. In addition, it is intended to welcome Newtonville residents and shoppers, high school and junior high school students who through Newtonville day and night.

Not expressed in any existing City plan but set forth by the Center is the need to improve the frontscape of the Center to the level of respect that is seen and felt in the "Oasis Garden". We have the experience of developing and maintaining garden, landscape, and passive recreation space for use by the whole community. On any given day or time one will observe the "Oasis Garden" being utilized by neighbors, the local workforce, students, and Senior Center participants (sometimes and happily all at the same time). The nature and care that is evident in this area is reflected in the respectful way it is utilized. The same is not evident in the frontscape of the Center. The former Newtonville Branch Library once had an inviting entrance, with benches, sun, shade, and a lighted kiosk. Seventy-five years later, those same trees cast so much shade that the seating is often dank and uninviting. The plantings obscure the building's lovely, historic front entrance. The front entrance has been closed, and there is no direct pathway to it. When one approaches the Center today, it is usually with an eye to figuring out what building this is, and how to get into it. It is not currently a place that invites you into the garden or the Center. The kiosk is dilapidated, its windows have no news, and its glass is scratched and peeling. The benches are damp and in poor repair, often uninviting. A chess table (an earlier gift to the Senior Center) was installed in a location that is not conducive to the game, and without appropriate seating. There is no clear or inviting signage that identifies the building and its welcoming message. The Park at the Newton Senior Center is designed to improve community pride and presence at this city-owned building, and to reflect and increase the community's access to it.

3. **Community Support:** What is the nature and level of support for this project? Include letters of support and any petitions.

The level of community support for this project should be evident in the support letters and petitions submitted with this application. The eleven SCFN members have worked diligently to assess the need and develop the preliminary designs included in this proposal. In addition, you will find letters from community members who support us on an ongoing, daily basis, but who have taken this opportunity to express their support specifically for this project. They include neighbors, local business, students, senior center participants, community leaders, and other community organizations. Attached please find letters received by October 13<sup>th</sup> from:

- Kate Becker, Executive Director, New Art Center
- James Cellucci, Owner, Great Harvest Bread Company
- Anne Serafin, Neighbor
- Carol Ann Shea and Marguerite Major, Owners Century 21 Garden City Homes
- Robert Mortarelli, Manager, The Village Bank
- Kathleen Malloy, Ariadne Restaurant and Bar
- Jack Kimball, Owner, Taste in Newtonville
- Rose Madsen, Neighbor
- Nathan Cobb, Neighbor and Treasurer of Park Friends Inc.
- Edward Bloom, CFO International Data Group (owner of abutting property)
- Robert Dereubis, Deputy Commissioner Parks and Recreation
- Adele Hoffman, Chairperson, Newton Council on Aging
- Petitions signed by students and senior center participants

4. **Timeline:** What is the schedule for project implementation, including a timeline for all critical milestones?

- funding allocated- April 2005
- Design development, construction documents, approvals, and bid package - April 2005 thru October 2005
- Bid process completed- December 2005
- Construction -March thru April 2006
- Plantings- April 2006
- Grand Opening- late Spring 2006

5. **Credentials:** How will the experience of the applicant contribute to the success of this project?

The City's Department of Human Services has managed senior centers for close to forty years. In the beginning, until 1993, senior centers were found in storefront locations, schoolrooms, and extra space in function halls, church basements, and libraries. In October 1993, the Newton Senior Center opened its doors in the newly renovated, historically significant, bright and lovely, Newtonville Branch Library building. Since its opening the Senior Center has become a community focal point not only through the services and programs that the Council on Aging and Senior Center provides to thousands of Newton's seniors, but also through the presence it has in the village of Newtonville. The Senior Center has become a space that is a resource to the whole community.

The original renovations were made possible with Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds amounting to approximately \$750,000. Another \$300,000 was privately raised and managed by the Senior Center Board of Directors, through its relationship with The Senior

Citizens Fund of Newton Inc. to furnish and equip the center. A large anonymous donation partnered with a small landscape and grounds line item from CDBG monies, allowed the creation of the award winning courtyard landscape that is now referred to as "The Oasis Garden." SCFN's mission is to "support Senior Centers in Newton" and it has done so for close to 30 years. Currently Co-Chaired by two past Presidents of the Senior Center Board of Directors (Audrey cooper and Carol Ann Shea), SCFN members also represent Council on Aging members, the business community, community activists, and one member who lends a particular expertise to The Park at the Newton Senior Center project. Katherine McGuinness is the founding Principal of Kessler McGuinness and Associates and former Chair of the Board of Directors of the Newton Senior Center. She is a nationally known consultant in accessibility and universal design, and was closely involved in the development of the Newton Senior Center's interiors and furnishings. (See attached list of SCFN Board)

The SCFN has retained two design firms to help develop the preliminary garden designs presented in this proposal. Wingnut Gardens' Principal Diane Syverson has maintained and developed the Oasis Garden and the current frontscape for three years, and was asked by the SCFN to develop a plan to upgrade the front area. When CPA funds became a potential funding source, Ms. Syverson and the SCFN turned to the nationally known firm of Pressley Associates to develop the plans enclosed in this proposal. We are fortunate to have the skill and art of such world-class landscape architects designing the Park at the Newton Senior Center, as they are both Newton residents. Their vast experience with public parks, including the East Boston Piers Park assures us that this park will combine the necessarily intimate, backyard scale with appropriate materials, methods, and construction documents for a public, unsupervised park. Pressley Associates has also developed the cost estimate for this project based on certain materials assumptions and their experience with public bidding and project management. Please reference background information enclosed.

6. **Success Factors:** How will the success of this project will be measured? Be as specific as possible.

We will measure the success of this project in two ways. First, since the primary goal of The Park at The Newton Senior Center project is to provide a fully accessible, passive recreation public park for people of all ages and abilities, its success will be visible to all. Visible to all passing by when, the park's success will be evidenced by the park's use by a broad spectrum of people, young and old, singles and groups, interacting or reflecting. When we see participants of all the age groups utilizing and respecting the Park at the Newton Senior Center for passive recreation and intergenerational activity, we will have succeeded in providing a lifelong benefit to the Newton Community. Second, since it is a garden and all gardens require maintenance, the project's success will be defined by the City and the SCFN's ability to build and maintain it with the same successful, public-private partnership that has already developed the NSC and its Oasis Garden. The City is **not** being asked to fund its maintenance beyond the current maintenance already provided by the Parks and Recreation Department. The SCFN will continue its maintenance with private funds.

"If you invest in beauty, it will remain with you all the days of your life" (Frank Lloyd Wright)

7. **Budget:** What is the total budget for the project and how will CPA funds be spent? All items of expenditure must be clearly identified. Distinguish between hard and soft costs and contingencies. (NOTE: CPA funds may NOT be used for maintenance.)

The total project budget is \$329,210, of which this proposal requests \$271,210 from the City's CPA funds. The SCFN has already expended \$7,000 on preliminary design fees to prepare the conceptual design, presentation materials, and detailed cost estimates included herein. See attached Cost Estimate dated 10/05/04 and Design Fee proposal dated 10/06/04

8. **Other Funding:** What additional funding sources are available, committed, or under consideration? Include commitment letters, if available, and describe any other attempts to secure funding for this project.

Prior to this application process SCFN committed funds to professionally create a conceptual design and cost estimate for The Park at the Newton Senior Center. In addition, members of the SCFN and staff of the Newton Senior Center have spent well over 100 hours, valued at thousands of dollars, to manage the development of this preliminary design, cost estimate, and proposal. This shows that City staff and Newton citizens have already made a commitment to provide a fully accessible, passive recreation park environment for the entire community to use and enjoy.

For the past 30 years the SCFN has sent an annual letter to the community to raise money that supplements the City, State, Federal, and private funds that allow the Center to remain a community focal point and to meet the needs of Newton's seniors. The SCFN will send a letter in the early spring of 2005 (assuming that the CPA funds are awarded to this project) "planting the seed" for the newly established "Park at the Newton Senior Center Endowment Fund". SCFN will provide the ongoing maintenance of \$6,000/year through its proven and ongoing community fundraising.

9. **Maintenance:** If ongoing maintenance is required for your project, how will it be funded?

Since the creation of The Oasis Garden and the landscape design that encompasses the center's building, the maintenance needs have been met through the creation of partnerships and the development of community support. The following is a list of the partnerships that have allowed us to establish and maintain the garden/landscape and grounds upkeep to this point;

- CDBG funding
- Anonymous \$20,000 earmarked donation raised by SCFN for creation of the Oasis Garden.
- \$10,000 donation from SCFN to install an underground irrigation system.
- \$3000 donation from SCFN for purchase and installation of an outdoor shed for grounds maintenance.
- In-kind maintenance by Newton Parks and Recreation Department includes:
  - Snow removal
  - Trash removal (daily)
  - Lawn care
  - Leaf removal
  - Maintenance of irrigation system
  - Provision of bark and leaf mulch and wood chips under the "adopt a space" program
- Community Service projects:



- Annual Newton Serves program under the Office of Volunteer Services, spring clean up
  - Cops and Kids program: clean up, painting, raking, etc
- Daily site upkeep by Senior Center Custodial staff
- Informal site upkeep by Senior Center staff, volunteers, and participants
- Ongoing funding, averaging \$6,000/year over the last ten years, from the SCFN for professional landscape maintenance by outside vendors.

The design anticipates no additional maintenance costs, as the SCFN already supports maintenance of the current front landscape of the Senior Center, and has directed the designers to ensure a final design anticipating a similar level of maintenance. No changes to the collaborative maintenance mechanism described above are anticipated. The SCFN intends to continue its support for the maintenance of the garden, landscape, and The Park at the Newton Senior Center.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:** Provide the following additional information, as applicable.

10. Documentation that you have control over the site, such as Purchase and Sale Agreement, option, or deed. **See Attached**
11. For projects that include construction or rehabilitation, include the existing and proposed site plan, floor plans, elevations, and any other drawings as necessary to visually describe the proposal. **See attached**
12. Evidence that the project is in compliance with the zoning ordinance, Architectural Access Board Regulations, or any other laws or regulations. Or, if zoning relief is required, specify what relief is needed and when an application will be made to the City for zoning review.  
N/A
13. Evidence that the appropriate City Boards and Commissions have approved the project (for example, proposed new uses on Parks & Recreation land requires approval from the Parks and Recreation Commission). **Although Parks and Recreation does not have an approval role in this project, because of our ongoing relationship as recipients of their department's in-kind services this project was brought to their attention and described in terms of future maintenance needs. The Commissioner of Parks and Recreation, Fran Towle was in complete support of the proposal.**
14. Evidence that the proposed site is free of hazardous materials or that there is a plan for remediation in place. **The Senior Center passed approval of this within its original approvals for occupancy required during renovation.**
15. Evidence that appropriate professional standards will be followed if construction, restoration or rehabilitation is proposed. **See enclosed credentials of Pressley Associates.**
16. Information indicating how this project can be used to achieve additional community benefits.

NOTE: If the requested funds are for a real estate acquisition, an independent appraisal will be required which the applicant will be required to fund. No funding decisions will be made without an independent appraisal. Contact Jennifer Goldson, Community Preservation Planner, at 617-796-1131 or [jgoldson@ci.newton.ma.us](mailto:jgoldson@ci.newton.ma.us) to arrange for an independent appraisal.